DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 087 176 EC 061 212

TITLE	Housing; Policy Statement.
INSTITUTION	American Foundation for the Blind, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Oct 68
NOTE	3p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Blind; *Exceptional Child Services; *Housing; National Organizations; Normalization (Handicapped); Partially Sighted; *Public Policy; Residential Programs; *Visually Handicapped
IDENTIFIERS	*American Foundation for the Blind

ABSTRACT

Presented by the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) are background information and policy statements on community housing, use of rehabilitation centers, housing for children, and housing for aged persons who are visually handicapped. Because of society's adherence to the concept of the single family home it is maintained that institutional housing should be considered appropriate only for reasons such as individual inability to exercise freedom of choice for independent living. The AFB housing policies are described to be based on the proposition that blindness alone is no cause for separation of individuals from the rest of society. Specified are integrated facilities in community housing, temporary residential facilities for rehabilitation, efforts to maintain visually handicapped children in the home or special schools near the home, and provision for special services for blind aged persons living in residential facilities under government or voluntary auspices. (MC)

American Foundation
for the Blind, Inc.
15 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011

Policy Statement

ED 087176

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

BACKGROUND

Notwithstanding twentieth century trends toward increasing mobile population and consequent loosening of family ties, the appropriate housing unit for the vast number of individuals in our society continues to be the family home within a neighborhood as part of a community. For families, as well as for individuals living independently of a family unit, selection of and responsibility for housing rests with the family or the individual within economic limitations and personal or social preferences.

Institutional or group housing in our society is considered appropriate only:

a. for reasons of temporary contingencies, or

b. where groups of families or individuals voluntarily band together to provide for their mutual housing needs, or

c. where individuals can no longer exercise freedom of choice for independent living or in order to insure their own protection or that of society's.

The history of services to persons who are blind or otherwise visually impaired in western society has been characterized by a protective, indeed a patronizing coloration on the supposition that such persons were not capable of achieving independent and useful lives. More recent understandings and attitudes affirms that the above frame of reference affecting housing applies exactly the same for blind or otherwise visually impaired individuals as it does for the general population.

POLICY

The policies that follow are based on the proposition that blindness alone is no cause for the separation of

EC 061 212

individuals from the rest of society, and that visually impaired persons need not be dealt with as a specially defined group within our society.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

In recent decades, federal, state, and local governments, including quasi-governmental agencies as well as private interests, have developed community housing projects for the purpose of replacing deteriorated areas with adequate housing facilities.

Any such housing projects which tend to separate persons who are blind or otherwise visually impaired and their families from the sighted community would be considered by the American Foundation for the Blind as a contradiction to present-day concepts of integration of handicapped people in normal community living.

USE OF REHABILITATION CENTERS

Experience has demonstrated that rehabilitation objectives for blind or otherwise visually impaired people can often best be achieved within a rehabilitation facility requiring temporary residence.

Because certain services, uniquely applicable to visually impaired persons in rehabilitation efforts, can most practically be made available in a residential rehabilitation facility, the American Foundation for the Blind affirms that such special temporary residential facilities may be necessary for the achievement of rehabilitation objectives.

HOUSING FOR CHILDREN

The family home, as the central housing unit in our society, is especially significant for the growth and development of children. It is within the framework of the home that children should obtain the basic warmth and understanding that are so important to their developing identities and their achievement of fundamental inner security. The home, too, is the initial testing ground within which children, in their emerging relationships with parents and siblings, begin to obtain basic experiences for relating to their neighborhood, their community, and to the demands of social living. The American Foundation for the Blind affirms that these principles regarding the home as the fundamental unit of social relationships are no less true for blind or

otherwise visually impaired children than they are for all others.

Even when the educational needs of the child or the existing educational facilities of a state require a boarding arrangement for the child in a school away from home, the Foundation believes that it is imperative that the child be provided with frequent exposure to his home environment.

HOUSING FOR THE AGING

Deterioration of vision and blindness are but two of the many debilitations which sometimes occur with the onset of age. Many aging individuals, either because of debilitating factors or social and economic ones, can no longer live with their families or provide for their needs independently.

For such aging individuals our society properly provides, either through government structures or under voluntary auspices, the necessary housing facilities for their care.

The American Foundation for the Blind affirms the principle that blindness in aging people is not a special debilitation requiring separate facilities, but is rather one of many debilitations found in aging people, and that whatever special services blind or otherwise visually impaired people may need should be built into regular residential facilities so that aging blind people can be cared for together with their sighted peers.

October 1968